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DO 670 United Methodist Theology

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DO 670 UNITED METHODIST THEOLOGY

1:00 – 2:50 TUESDAY

FALL 2005

DR. LARRY WOOD, PROFESSOR

WELCOME to this class in United Methodist Theology. This class entails more than just United Methodist theology. It is also a class on how a United Methodist preacher is called upon to interact with contemporary theology as well. This class will be a combination of lectures and group-led discussions. Learning entails more than just gathering information together to be memorized. Insights are developed largely through conversations in a dialogical situation, and this class will challenge us to think about some of the implications of theology as it is being developed and promoted in the contemporary world, particularly as it relates to the life of the Church today. Ideas are not innocent, but have profound implications. This is especially true with regard to preachers of the gospel. How the gospel is understood impacts the spiritual life of the believer and the Church in general. I'm glad to have you as part of this community of learning as we share together on United Methodist theology.

DESCRIPTION

A survey of Methodist theology after Wesley to the present with a special focus upon its American developments. Assuming already an understanding of Wesleyan theology, the course traces doctrinal developments within United Methodism. Focus is also placed upon various trends in contemporary theology.

GOALS

Upon the completion of this course, students will:

1. Be acquainted with some of the representative theological trends, movements, and theologians within United Methodism;
2. Be encouraged to see the relevance of theology for pastoral and denominational leadership in the United Methodist Church;
3. Be equipped with categories that are necessary for engaging in serious theological dialog with peers and colleagues;
4. Be able to apply appropriate and relevant theological reflection in sermon preparation;
5. Be able to evaluate recent developments in Methodist theology in the light of Wesley's sermons, *Notes*, and *Articles of Religion*;
6. Be familiar with recent relevant theological trends, movements, and theologians outside of the United Methodist tradition;
7. Be inspired (hopefully) to enjoy the responsibility of thinking theologically. What an awesome gift God has given humanity by endowing us with the capacity to understand and to know each other and to know him! Through the appropriation of categories (thought-forms), we are enabled to understand the shared experiences of life in general and of our experience of God in particular. Spirituality and the capacity of the mind to think go together in hand.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS

1. Class attendance is expected. Unexcused absences may result in a grade reduction.
2. Each student will invest between five and six hours per week in outside preparation for this class, as stipulated by the ATS Catalog (see section entitled "Academic Information," subsection, "Preparation").
3. Each student will read carefully all assigned readings.
4. Class time will be spent in presenting different ideas, movements, and theologians, which one would expect to encounter in the United Methodist ministry.
5. Students will write a 150-word reflection on each of the assigned chapters in the required texts and required readings. It is recommended that students keep these in a special notebook binder. There are no grades assigned to these reflection papers, but they are considered part of preparation for each class session. Failure to fulfill this assignment will result in a grade reduction. Students will be asked to sign a statement each week in class that they have fulfilled this assignment prior to coming to class. As an alternative to writing the reflection papers on each chapter, students may mark-up their books according to the guidelines laid out by Mortimer Adler in his essay, "How to Mark a Book."
<http://radicalacademy.com/adlermarkabook.htm>.
6. Class sessions will be dialogical and interactive. Each student can expect to participate in panel discussions over the course of the semester. The professor will serve as moderator and resource person. Each panel will consist of two or three students and the professor. Students serving on the panels will expand their theological reflection papers to include a more detailed analysis of the readings and will raise questions and issues, which should be discussed by the whole class.
7. Each student will write a twelve-page research paper on some theme, doctrine, or theologian relevant to United Methodism.

REQUIRED TEXTS

1. L. Wood, *The Meaning of Pentecost in Early Methodism, Rediscovering John Fletcher As John Wesley's Vindicator and Designated Successor* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2002). Chapters 11-16, pp. 223-385. Pneumatology has been a central focus of Asbury Theological Seminary since its very beginning. This corresponds to its emphasis upon Christian perfection. This book shows that the baptism with the Spirit and Pentecostal terminology were widely used in 19th Century American Methodism. The last chapters of this book explore this theme in Methodist history since Wesley. The first half of this book is about John Fletcher "pentecostalizing" John Wesley's theology and it serves as a text in DO690. An assumption of this book is that spiritual vitality in United Methodism depends upon an adequate theology of the Holy Spirit, which can be preached and lived.
2. *Doctrine and Theology in the United Methodist Church*, ed. Thomas A. Langford (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1991).
3. Thomas A. Langford, *Practical Divinity, Volume 2, Readings in Wesleyan Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999).
4. Scott J. Jones, *United Methodist Doctrine, The Extreme Center* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002).

5. Albert C. Outler, *Theology in the Wesleyan Spirit* (Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 1975).
6. James V. Heidinger II, *United Methodist Renewal* (Wilmore, KY: Forum for Scriptural Christianity, 1988).

RECOMMENDED WEBSITE

Ted Campbell has posted online an excellent book on ecumenical consensus on central Christian teachings. I recommend this to you very highly.

<http://www.christianmysteries.info/>

WEEKLY CLASS SCHEDULE

SEPT. 5 - EVANGELICAL LIBERALISM AND THEOLOGICAL PLURALISM IN THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

- ✚ Thomas Langford, "Introduction, A Wesleyan/Methodist Theological Tradition," *Doctrine and Theology in the United Methodist Church*, ed. Thomas A Langford (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1991), pp. 9-16.
- ✚ Albert C. Outler, "Introduction to the Report of the 1968-72 Theological Study Commission," *Doctrine and Theology in the United Methodist Church*, pp. 19-25.
- ✚ Outler, "The Wesleyan Quadrilateral—In John Wesley," *Doctrine and Theology in the United Methodist Church*, pp. 75-88.

Sept. 12 - - EVANGELICAL LIBERALISM AND THEOLOGICAL PLURALISM IN THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH (Con't)

- ✚ Richard P. Heitzenrater, "In Search of Continuity and Consensus: the Road to the 1988 Doctrinal Statement," *Doctrine and Theology in the United Methodist Church*, pp. 93-108.
- ✚ Richard P. Heitzenrater, "At Full Liberty: Doctrinal Standards in Early American Methodism," *Doctrine and Theology in the United Methodist Church*, pp. 109-124.
- ✚ Thomas C. Oden, "What Are Established Standards of Doctrine"? A Response to Richard Heitzenrater," pp. 125-142.
- ✚ Ted A. Campbell, "The 'Wesleyan Quadrilateral': The Story of A Modern Methodist Myth," *Doctrine and Theology in the United Methodist Church*, pp. 154-161.
- ✚ Langford, "Conciliar Theology: A Report," *Doctrine and Theology in the United Methodist Church*, pp. 176-185.
- ✚ Mary Elizabeth Moore, "The Style and Substance of United Methodist Theology in Transition," *Doctrine and Theology in the United Methodist Church*, pp. 208-222.
 - Albert Outler, "Our Theological Task" in the 1972 *Book of Discipline* ¶ 68.
 - Bishop Earl Hunt, "Our Doctrinal Heritage," ¶ 66 in the 1988 *Book of Discipline*, which was written under the chairmanship of Bishop Earl Hunt (with Dr. Kenneth Kinghorn as one of the writers).
- ✚ Geoffrey Wainwright, "From Pluralism Towards Catholicity?" *Doctrine and Theology in the United Methodist Church*, pp. 223-231.

SEPT 19 - THE GOOD NEWS MOVEMENT AND THE CONFESSING MOVEMENT

- ✚ James V. Heidinger II, *United Methodist Renewal* (Wilmore, KY: Forum for Scriptural Christianity, 1988). Panel #1
- ✚ "A Confessional Statement" and "Doctrinal Tracts" of the Confessing Movement. These can be downloaded from website: <http://www.confessingumc.org/index.htm>
- ✚ Wesley, "The Catholic Spirit" (Sermon 39). This sermon can be downloaded from website: <http://gbgm-umc.org/umhistory/wesley/sermons/>
- ✚ "Turning the Mainline Around," <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2003/008/1.34.html>
- ✚ Dr. Jim Heidinger will be our guest.

SEPT 26 - UNITED METHODIST DOCTRINES (PANEL #2)

- ✚ Scott J. Jones, *United Methodist Doctrine, The Extreme Center*, pp. 17-93 (Panel #3)
- ✚ Scott J. Jones, *United Methodist Doctrine, The Extreme Center*, pp. 99-141 (Panel #4)

OCT 3 - UNITED METHODIST DOCTRINES (PANEL #5)

- ✚ Scott J. Jones, *United Methodist Doctrine, The Extreme Center*, pp. 277-296
 - United Methodist Statement on the Environment
<http://www.acton.org/ppolicy/environment/theology/methodist.html>

OCT 10 - Wesleyan Holiness Theology

- ✚ Wood, *The Meaning of Pentecost*, Chapters 11 (Panel #6), 12 (Panel #7), pp. 223-292.
- ✚ Optional: Langford, "Holiness Theology," *Practical Divinity*, pp. 131-146. Langford says: "The relationship between these two founding fathers [Wesley and Fletcher] is still under investigation" (p. 141) and that the relation between Christian perfection and the use of Pentecostal language is still "not settled" (p. 146) in Wesley Studies. *The Meaning of Pentecost in Early Methodism* is the first study that researched this theme in depth and was concluded after Langford's book was written.
- ✚ Wood, *The Meaning of Pentecost in Early Methodism*, chapter 13 (Panel #8)-chapter 14 (Panel #9), pp. 293-336.

OCT 17 -- RECENT LITURGICAL/THEOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS - THE NEW BAPTISMAL LITURGY.

- ✚ Wood, *The Meaning of Pentecost*, chapter 15 (Panel #10), chapter 16 (Panel #11), pp. 337-385.
- ✚ "By Water and the Spirit: A United Methodist Understanding of Baptism." You may download this from the United Methodist Church website: <http://www.gbod.org/worship/images/water&spirit.pdf>. This document is also available in *The Book of Resolutions of the United Methodist Church* (1996), pp. 716-735. (Please read, but students are not required to write a reflection paper on it).

OCT 24 --

- ✚ Albert C. Outler, *Theology in the Wesleyan Spirit* Chapter 1-2 (Panel #12), 3-4 (Panel #13)

OCT 31- NOV 14 -- "Who's Who" in United Methodist Theology

- ✚ "Early Developments," Thomas A. Langford, *Practical Divinity*, Volume 2, *Readings in Wesleyan Theology*, pp. 10-53 (Panel #14, Oct. 31)
- ✚ "Developing Distinctives," Thomas A. Langford, *Practical Divinity*, Volume 2, *Readings in Wesleyan Theology*, pp. 56-84, 96-105 (Panel #15, Oct 31)
- ✚ "Changing Directions," Thomas A. Langford, *Practical Divinity*, Volume 2, *Readings in Wesleyan Theology*, pp. 114-124, 146-182 (Panel #16, Nov. 7)
- ✚ "New Times," Thomas A. Langford, *Practical Divinity*, Volume 2, *Readings in Wesleyan Theology*, 184-192 (Panel #16, Nov. 7)
- ✚ "Contemporary Voices," Thomas A. Langford, *Practical Divinity*, Volume 2, *Readings in Wesleyan Theology*, pp. 226-252 (Panel #17) 253-268, 290-312 (Panel #18, Nov. 14)

NOV 28 - DEC 5 -- SPECIAL ISSUES

- ✚ The Biblical and Theological Sources of Infant Baptism - a lecture (Nov. 28)
- ✚ Feminism (Nov 28—Panel #19)
 - "FEMINIST THEOLOGY EXAMINED -- SOPHIA AND THE BIBLE" BY JOHN OSWALT
<http://www.goodnewsmag.org/library/articles/oswalt-ma94.htm>
 - Evangelical Feminists,
 - ✓ <http://www.cbeinternational.org/new/audio/index.shtml>
 - ✓ Download "Women in the New Testament: A Middle Eastern Culture View" by Kenneth E. Bailey.
<http://www.cbeinternational.org/new/audio/index.shtml>
- ✚ Postliberal Theology - "Being Postliberal: A Response to James Gustafson" by William C. Placher <http://www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=536> (Dec. 5).
- ✚ Homosexuality (Panel #20, Dec. 5)
 - Wolfhart Pannenberg, "Should We Support Gay Marriage? NO."
<http://www.goodnewsmag.org/magazine/6NovDec/nd03pannenberg.htm>
 - *Good News* report on Beth Stroud and Ed Johnson.
http://www.goodnewsmag.org/news/GN_StmtJudclCncl_BishPastrl11-07-05.htm
 - "MEMBERSHIP RUSE. WILL METHODIST COURTS EMBRACE 'GAY' METHODISTS?" BY MARK TOOLEY.
<http://WWW.TOUCHSTONEMAG.COM/ARCHIVES/ARTICLE.PHP?ID=19-03-056-R>
 - "History of Policies on Homosexuality in the United Methodist Church," provided by a pro-homosexual action group, SoulForce.
<http://www.soulforce.org/article/69>
- ✚ "Bouknight Declares Bright Future for the United Methodism"
<http://www.goodnewsmag.org/magazine/MarchApril/ma06news.htm>